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Consumers have the right to know what's in their bottled water. As a member of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, I support the FDA's proposal that bottled-water manufacturers be required to make available detailed reports of contaminants, just as public water utilities do. All bottled-water labels should also disclose where the water comes from.

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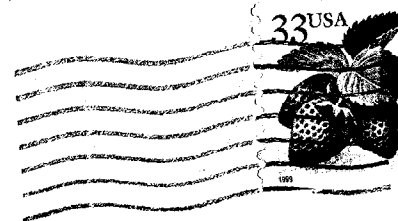
Outdated tests miss microbes in water

Widely used water-safety tests are outdated and unable to detect many of the microbes scientists now know can make people sick, researchers reported Tuesday. Currently, water is tested for the presence of coliforms, organisms once thought to exist only in the intestines of animals, but scientists at a Los Angeles meeting of the American Society for Microbiology say the tests can no longer be considered adequate. The tests, developed in the 1950s, can detect bacteria such as shigella and salmonella, but they miss such microbes as cryptosporidium — the parasite that infected Milwaukee's water supply in 1993 — Norwalk viruses and rotavirus, says Jay Grimes of the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. He and colleagues are preparing a report to urge state and federal agencies to use more sophisticated tests on water.

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